

MOTIVES FOR STEADFASTNESS

NO. 1111

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”
1 Corinthians 15:58.*

THE apostle had been putting forth all his strength to prove the doctrine of the resurrection, yet he was not diverted from his habitual custom of making practical use of the doctrine which he established. He proves his point, and then he goes on to his “therefore,” which is always an inference of godliness. He is the great master of doctrine. If you want the Christian creed elaborated, and its details laid out in order, you must turn to the epistles of Paul.

But at the same time he is always a practical teacher. Paul was not like those who hew down trees, and square them by rule and system, but forget to build the house therewith. True, he lifts up a goodly axe upon the thick trees, but he always makes use of that which he hews down. He lays the beams of his chambers, and forgets not the carved work thereof. He brings to light the great stones of truth, and cuts them out of the live rock of mystery. But he is not content with being a mere quarryman, he labors to be a wise master builder, and with the stones of truth to erect the temple of Christian holiness.

If I shift the figure, I may say that our apostle does not grope among the lower strata of the truth, hunting out the deep things and spending all his force upon them, but he plows the rich upper soil, he sows, he reaps, he gathers in a harvest, and feeds many. Thus should the practical ever flow from the doctrinal like wine from the clusters of the grape. The Puritans were known to call the end of the sermon, in which they enforced the practical lessons, the “improvement” of the subject, and truly, the apostle Paul was a master in the way of “improvement.” Hence in this present chapter, though he has been dealing with the fact of the resurrection and arguing with all his might in defense of it, he cannot close till he has said, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

My brethren, this is a lesson for us. Let us never reckon that we have learned a doctrine till we have seen its bearing upon our lives. Whatever we discover in God's Word, let us pray the Holy Spirit to make us feel the sanctifying influence of it. You know not a man because you recognize his features, you must also know his spirit, and so the mere acquaintance with the letter of truth is of small account—you must feel its influence and know its tendency. There are some brethren who are so enamored of doctrine that no preacher will content them unless he gives them over and over again clear statements of certain favorite truths. But the moment you come to speak of practice, they fight shy of it at once, and either denounce the preacher as being legal, or they grow weary of that which they dare not contradict.

Let it never be so with us. Let us follow up truth to its practical “therefore”. Let us love the practice of holiness as much as the belief of the truth, and though we desire to *know*, let us take care when we know that we *act* according to the knowledge, for if we do not, our knowledge itself will become mischievous to us, will involve us in responsibilities, but will bring to us no effectual blessing. Let everyone here who knows aught, now pray God to teach him what He would have him to do as the consequence of that knowledge.

This morning our subject will be the practical outflow of the resurrection, the great inference which should be drawn from the fact that death is swallowed up in victory. There should be fine flour from the grinding of such choice wheat.

The text has in it two things. First, it mentions *two great points of Christian character*—“steadfast, unmovable,” and “always abounding in the work of the Lord.” And secondly, it gives us *a grand motive for the cultivation of these two characteristics*—inasmuch as the doctrine of the resurrection being true, “you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

I. First, then, let us consider THE TWO GREAT POINTS OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER, here set before us.

The first one is, “Be you steadfast, unmovable.” Two things are wanted in a good soldier, steadiness under fire and enthusiasm during a charge. The first is the more essential in most battles, for victory often depends upon the power of endurance which makes a battalion of men into a wall of brass. We want the dashing courage which can carry a position by storm—that will be used up in the second characteristic—“always abounding in the work of the Lord.” But in the commencement of the attack, and at critical points all through the campaign, the most essential virtue for victory is for a soldier to know how to keep his place, and “having done all to stand.”

The apostle has given us two words descriptive of godly firmness, and we may be sure that as Holy Scripture never uses a superfluity of words, each word has a distinct meaning. “Steadfast” alone would not have sufficed, but “unmovable” must be added. Let us look at the word “steadfast” first.

Beloved, be you *steadfast*. By this the apostle means, first, be you steadfast in the *doctrines* of the Gospel. Know what you know, and knowing it, cling to it. Hold fast the form of sound words. Do not be as some are, of doubtful mind, who know nothing, and even dare to say that nothing can be known. To such the highest wisdom is to suspect the truth of everything they once knew, and to hang in doubt as to whether there are any fundamentals at all.

I would like an answer from the Broad Church divines to one short and plain question. What truth is so certain and important as to justify a man in sacrificing his life to maintain it? Is there any doctrine for which a wise man should yield his body to be burned? According to all that I can understand of modern liberalism, religion is a mere matter of opinion, and no opinion is of sufficient importance to be worth contending for. The martyrs might have saved themselves a world of loss and pain if they had been of this school, and the Reformers might have spared the world all this din about Popery and Protestantism.

I deplore the spread of this infidel spirit, it will eat as does a canker. Where is the strength of a church when its faith is held in such low esteem? Where is conscience? Where is love of truth? Where soon will be common honesty? In these days with some men, in religious matters, black is white, and all things are whichever color may happen to be in your own eye, the color being nowhere but in your eye, theology is only a set of opinions, a bundle of views and persuasions. The Bible to these gentry is a nose of wax which everybody may shape just as he pleases.

Beloved, beware of falling into this state of mind, for if you do so, I boldly assert that you are not Christian at all, for the Spirit which dwells in believers hates falsehood, and clings firmly to the truth. Our great Lord and Master taught mankind certain great truths plainly and definitely, stamping them with His, “Verily, verily.” And as to the marrow of them, He did not hesitate to say, “He that believes shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned,” a sentence very abhorrent to modern charity, but infallible nevertheless. Jesus never gave countenance to the base-born charity which teaches that it is no injury to a man’s nature to believe a lie. Beloved, be firm, be steadfast, be positive. There are certain things which are true. Find them out, grapple them to you as with hooks of steel. Buy the truth at any price and sell it at no price.

Be you steadfast also in the sense of not being changeable. Some have one creed today and another creed tomorrow, variable as a lady’s fashions. Indeed, we once heard a notable divine assert that he had to alter his creed every week. He was unable to tell on Monday what he would believe on Wednesday, for so much fresh light broke in upon his receptive intellect. There are crowds of persons nowadays of that kind described by Mr. Whitefield when he said you might as well try to measure the moon for a suit of clothes as to tell what they believed. Ever learning but never coming to knowledge of the truth. Shifting as sandbanks are their teachings, and as full of danger.

The apostle says to us, “Be you steadfast.” Having learned the truth, hold it, grow into it, let the roots of your soul penetrate into its center and drink up the nourishment which lies therein, but do not be forever transplanting yourselves from soil to soil. How can a tree grow when perpetually shifted? How can a soul make progress if it is evermore changing its course? Do not sow in Beersheba and then rush off to reap in Dan.

Jesus Christ is not yea and nay. He is not today one thing, and tomorrow another, but the “same today, yesterday, and forever.” True religion is not a series of guesses at truth, but “we speak what we do know, and testify what we have seen.” That which your experience has proven to you, that which you have clearly seen to be the Word of God, that which the Spirit bears witness to in your consciousness, that hold you that with an iron grasp. Skin for skin, yea, all that a man has, he will give for his life, and to us the holding of the truth is essential to our life. The Holy Ghost has given His unction unto the people of God, and they know the truth, and moreover they know that no lie is of the truth. Were it not for this anointing, the very elect would have been deceived in this age of falsehood. Brethren, be you steadfast.

But the apostle meant much more, he intended to urge us to be steadfast in *character*. Right in the middle of the chapter upon the resurrection, he speaks about character. He shows that a change of view upon the doctrine of the resurrection would legitimately lead to a change of action, for if the dead rise not, then it is clearly wisdom to say, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” But inasmuch as the resurrection doctrine is true, he urges us to keep to that holy living which is the natural inference from belief in eternal life, and the judgment to come. As you have looked to the recompense of the reward hereafter, and have sought to order your conversation by a sense of the coming judgment, so do you still, and be you steadfast.

Alas, we might preach tearful discourses to many Christians upon steadfastness of behavior, for they have started aside as a deceitful bow. There was a time when their integrity was unquestioned, but now they have learned the ways of a faithless world. Truth was on their lip, but now they have learned to flatter. They have lost the pure speech of the New Jerusalem, and speak in the Babylonian tongue. How many professors were once exceedingly zealous, but are now careless! The fire of their love burns dimly, its coal is all but quenched. Prayer was their delight, but now it wearies them. The praises of God were perpetually in their mouth, but now they forget their Benefactor. They labored abundantly in the Redeemer’s service, but now they can scarce be stirred out of their luxurious indolence.

Beloved, if God has sanctified you by His Spirit, be you steadfast in character. Suffer not your divinely-wrought sanctity to be stained. Be not just sometimes watchful, but be you always so, by the help of the good Spirit. Whereunto you have attained in the things of God, walk by that rule. Be not corrupted by evil communications. Make your private and public life of a piece. Let not the worldling peep into your house and discover that your godliness is an article intended for foreign consumption only. Be such that if you be watched anywhere, and at any time, your sincerity will be manifested. O for consistency among professors! Its absence is the weakness of the church, and its restoration will bring to us unnumbered blessings.

In addition to being steadfast in doctrine and character, we need to be exhorted to steadfastness in *attainments*. O brethren, if we were now what we sometimes have been, how ripe for glory should we be! If we could but keep the ground which we conquer, how soon would all Canaan be ours! But is not Christian life, with a great many very like the condition of the sea? The sea advances, it gains gradually upon the beach—you would think it was about to inundate the land, but after it has reached its highest point, it retires, and so it spends its force in perpetual ebb and flow.

Are not ebb-and-flow Christians common as seashells? Life to them is the unprogressive change of advance and recede; today all earnest, tomorrow all indifferent; today generous, tomorrow mean; today filled with the fullness of God, tomorrow naked, poor, and miserable. What they build with one hand, they pull down with the other. Sad that it should be so.

I must confess I find it far easier to climb the greatest heights of grace, and especially of communion, than to maintain the elevation. For a flight now and then our wings are sufficient. We mount, we soar, we rise into the spiritual regions, and we exult as we rise. But our pinion droops, we grow weary of the heights, and we descend to earth like stones which have been thrown into the air. Alas! that it should be so.

Be you steadfast. When you climb, ask for grace to keep there. When your wing has borne you up, ask that there you may be poised till the Lord shall call you to your nest in heaven. Is your faith strong? Why should it decline again? Is your hope vivid? Why should those bright eyes of yours grow dim and look no more within the golden gates? Is your love fervent? Why should it be chilled? Cannot the breath of the Eternal Spirit keep the fire at full blaze? Wherefore is it that we run well and then are hindered? We are short-winded, we cannot watch with our Lord one hour, we grow weary and faint in our minds.

Alexander could not thus have won a world if, after fighting the battle of Issus, he had stopped short of the Granicus. If the Macedonian hero had said, "I have done enough, I will go back to Greece and enjoy my victories," his empire had never become universal. Nor would Columbus have discovered a new world if he had sailed a little way into the unknown ocean, and then had turned his timid prow towards port. "Onward!" is the motto of the earnest all the world over, and should it not be the watchword of the Christian? Shall we be content with a wretched poverty of grace? Shall we be satisfied to wear the rags of inconsistency? God forbid. Let us bestir ourselves, and when we make headway along the river of life, may God grant us grace to cast anchor and hold our place, lest we drift back with the next tide, or be blown back by the next change of wind. "Be you steadfast."

We shall not have brought out the full force of the text unless we say that the apostle evidently refers to *Christian work*, for he says, "Be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord". So that he means be steadfast in your work which the Lord has laid upon you to do. Perseverance is at once the crown and the cross of service. It is very easy to preach for a little while, but I can assure you that preaching to a congregation year after year involves no little toil. Yet are we bound to be steadfast in this ministry. A spurt, a leap, a bound—these are easy, but to press on continually is the difficulty.

Have you taken a class in the Sabbath school? The novelty of it may carry you through a month or two, but dear friend, be steadfast and hold on year after year, for therein will lie your honor and success. If you should be discouraged, because you meet with no present success, yet persevere, yea, endure to the end. If God has given you any work to do, it is yours to press forward in it, whether you prosper in it or not.

The Negro said, you remember, that if God bade him jump through a wall, whether he could go through it or not was no business of his. "Here I go," he says, "right at it." We may rest assured that the Lord never did command us to leap through a wall without causing it to give way when our faith brought us to the test. We have to obey the precept and leave the consequences. If God says, "Do it," the command is both the warrant for our act and the security for our being aided with all necessary help.

Noah preached for one hundred and twenty years, and when his term of warning ministry was over, where were his converts? He may have had a great many, but they were all dead and buried. And with the exception of himself and family, after one hundred and twenty years of ministry, there remained not one that God would preserve alive. And into the ark he went, the grandest unsuccessful preacher that ever lived, faithful unto death, to be rewarded of his God as much as if he had induced half the world to flee from the wrath to come. Let us, therefore, remain steadfast in doctrine, in character, in attainment, and in labor. To this end help us, O Holy Ghost.

But the apostle adds, "*unmovable*." He supposes that our steadfastness will be tried, and he bids us remain *unmovable*. Be "steadfast" in times of peace, like rocks in the midst of a calm and glassy sea. Be you "unmovable" if you are assailed like those same rocks in the midst of the tempest when the billows dash against them. Brethren, when you are assailed by *argument*, be unmovable. I say, "argument," but I am complimenting our adversaries, their objections do not deserve the name. It will never be possible

for any man living to answer all the queries which others can raise, or reply to all objections which may be brought against the most obvious facts. If any person here were skeptical as to my standing at this present moment upon this platform, I am not certain that I should be able to convince him that I am here. I am quite sure of it myself, but I have no doubt a skeptic would be able to advance objections which would require a keener wit than mine to remove, notwithstanding that the matter would be plain enough if the objector would throw away his logic and use his common sense.

Now the arguments against the resurrection which the apostle mentions were such as he could easily remove. Such a one as this, for instance, "How are the dead raised up?" Paul seems to have lost his patience in answering it, and he called the man a fool, and you may depend upon it, he was a fool, or else the apostle would not have called him so. Granted the existence of a God, you need never ask, "How?" If there is omnipotence, there is no room for the question, "How?" God the Almighty can do what He wills, and he is a fool who asks, "How?" after once he has believed in God.

Most of the objections against the articles of our holy faith are contemptible, yet none the less difficult to answer because contemptible, for an argument is not always apparently strong in proportion to its reasonableness. It may be easier to obviate an objection which has some force in it than to overthrow another which has positively no force at all. In fact, the most difficult arguments to answer are those which are insane at the core, for you must be insane yourself before you can quite catch the thought which insanity has uttered, and as you do not wish to qualify for controversy with fools, by becoming a fool yourself, you may not be able to reply to your antagonist.

It will be your right course to be steadfast and unmovable, that your adversary may see that his sophisms are of no avail. Whatever may be said against our faith we can afford to despise it, since we know that our Lord Jesus Christ has risen from the dead, the evidence of that fact is beyond dispute, and that being proven, our faith rests on a rock. Prove the resurrection (and we say it is proved by the best witnesses, and plenty of them), then our faith is true, and we will hold it in the teeth of all opposition.

Do not be carried away, therefore, by the sophistry of cunning men, neither be you cast down. When it is rumored at any time that a learned man has found out some very wonderful thing which is to put an end to the Bible, do you calmly reply—let him find out another wonderful thing, if so it pleases him. If our wise men have discovered a new origin for the human race, or if they have invented a new way of making a world, we hope their new toy will please them, but such things are not to your mind, we have other and weightier concerns besides fiddling or philosophizing. We have no more reverence for these profane dreamers than they have for the Bible. They are nothing to us. Christ has risen from the dead. Nothing in physiology or geology can ever contradict that. And if He be risen from the dead, them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him, and in that faith we abide.

We shall be met, in addition to argument by what is far more powerful, namely, by surrounding *example*. The world never overcame the church in argument yet, for it has always refuted itself. When let alone, the unbelieving world has eaten its own words, like Saturn devouring his own children. Whenever any smith in the world's armory has forged a weapon against the truth, there has always been another smith at work in the same smithy preparing another weapon with which to break the first in pieces. The man has done it not in the interests of the Gospel, but in his own interest, and with desire only for his own honor, but he has done the work of the Lord, not knowing what he did.

The bad example of the world has often told upon the soldiers of Christ with far more powerful effect. What the arms of Rome could not do against Hannibal, his Capuan holidays are said to have accomplished. His soldiers were conquered by luxury, though invincible by force. When the church lies down at ease, she is apt to feel the diseases of abundance. The current of the world runs furiously towards sin, and the fear is lest the Lord's swimmers should not be able to stem the flood. It is sad when professors of our holy religion do as others do. It is folly to be singular, except when to be singular is to be right, but it often happens that we forget the rightness of the thing in the fear of being singular.

Brethren, care nothing about custom, for custom is no excuse for sin. Be you steadfast, and if all men are turned to this or that, listen not to their, “Lo, heres,” and “Lo, theres,” but stand inflexible for holiness, and God, and truth. “Be you steadfast, unmovable.”

And as you are not moved by the world’s custom, so take care not to be moved by its *persecutions*. Today the persecutions which we meet with are very petty. They amount to little more than here and there the loss of a situation, the denial of trade, the being turned out of a farm, or more commonly they go no further than a sneer, a bad name, or a slander. But be you steadfast, unmovable, whatever may betide. Never let a man, who is but a worm, frown you away from your God. Bid defiance to his fierce looks and angry words, and like a man of God, continue in the right way whether you offend or please.

And equally be unmovable to the world’s *smiles*. It will put on its sweetest looks and tempt you with its painted cheeks and artful fascinations. Like Jezebel it will attire its head and look out of the window, but like Jehu do you say, “Fling her down!” No peace or truce are you to hold with this crooked and perverse generation.

If God prospers you in business, let not your riches make you proud. If you have to toil, and there should come in your way an easy escape from hard labor by some crooked path, accept it not, be unmovable. Let neither the soft south wind nor the boisterous north wind stir you from your foothold. God help you to be faithful unto death.

If ever there was a period in the Christian church when professors needed to be exhorted to be “steadfast, unmovable,” it is just now, for the foundations are removed and all things are out of course. Men remove the old landmarks, they break down the pillars of the house. All things reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and only He who keeps the feet of His saints can preserve our uprightness. I see the tacklings loosed, and the mast unstrengthened, and the brave vessel of the church is in an evil case. Many have left their moorings, and are drifting hither and thither, their helmsmen all amazed. No longer does the squadron of the Lord sail in order of battle, but the lines are broken and the vessels yield to the tossing of winds and waves.

Alas, that it should be so. O where is He that trod the sea? The pilot of the Galilean lake! I see Him walking the waters, and He cries to us who still stand true to the one Lord, the one faith, and the one baptism, “Be you steadfast, unmovable.” Whatever other denominations of Christians do, be you true to your Lord in all things, for those who forsake Him shall be written in the dust. Beloved, never stir away from the truth! Some are changeable by constitution like Reuben, “Unstable as water, they shall not excel.” A mind on wheels knows no rest, it is as a rolling thing before the tempest. Struggle against the desire for novelty, or it will lead you astray as the will-o’-the-wisp deceives the traveler. If you desire to be useful, if you long to honor God, if you wish to be happy, be established in the truth, and be not carried about by every wind of doctrine in these evil days, “Be you steadfast, unmovable.”

II. The second characteristic of a Christian, however, we must speak upon. He is described as “ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD,” in which we will briefly show that there are four things.

First, dear brethren, every Christian ought to be engaged “in the work of the Lord.” We should all have work to do for our divine Master. True, our everyday labor ought to be so done as to render honor to His name, but in addition to that, every Christian should be laboring in the Lord in some sphere of holy service. I shall not enlarge, but I shall pass the question round to each one—“What are you doing for Jesus Christ?” I pray each one here who makes a profession of faith in Jesus will answer the question, “What am I doing in the work and service of the Lord?” If you are doing nothing, I pray you bewail your slothfulness, and escape from it, for talents wrapped in napkins will be terrible witnesses against you.

Then the apostle says, secondly, we are not only to be, “in the work of the Lord,” but we are to *abound* in it. Do much, very much, all you can do, and a little more. “How is that?” asks one. I do not think a man is doing all he can do if he is not attempting more than he will complete. Our vessels are never full till they run over. The little over proves our zeal, tries our faith, casts us upon God, and wins

His help. That which we cannot do of ourselves leads us to call in divine strength, and then wonders are wrought. If you are only aiming at what you feel able to accomplish, your work will be a poor one, lacking in heroism, deficient in the noble element of confidence in the unseen Lord. Abound, then, and super-abound in the work of the Lord.

Next note that the apostle says, “*always* abounding.” Some Christians think it enough to abound on Sundays. Paul says, “Always abounding.” That has reference to Mondays, to which day does it not refer? When you are young and in your vigor, abound in service. I recommend all young men to work for God with all their might while they can, for all too soon our energies flag, and the dry and yellow leaf forbids any more young shoots.

I would equally urge every man of middle age to use all his time, gifts, and energies at once for the Lord—“always abounding.” Nor should the old man retire. He is to bring forth fruit in old age. The apostle says nothing about retiring from the work of the Lord, but “always abounding.” “Oh, but we must give the young people an opportunity of doing something for God!” Do you mean that you will give the young people an opportunity of doing *your* work, because if you do, I am in arms against so gross an error, for Christian work can never be done by proxy. Throw such an idea away with abhorrence.

This is the age of proxy. People are not charitable, but they beg a guinea from somebody else to be charitable with. It is said that charity nowadays means that A finds B to be in distress, and therefore asks C to help him. Let us not in this fashion shirk our work. Go and do your own work, each man bearing their own burden, and not trying to pile a double load on men’s shoulders. Brethren, from morn till night sow beside all waters with unstinting hand.

The text calls this service “*The work of the Lord*,” and we must ever bear this in mind, so that if we are enabled to abound in Christian service, we may never become proud, but may remember that it is God’s work in us rather than our own work, and whatever we accomplish is accomplished rather by God in us than by us for God. Jesus tells us, “Without me you can do nothing.” “Always abound,” my brethren, not only in the work *of* the Lord, but in the work *of* the Lord in yourselves, for only as He works in you to will and to do, will you be able to work in His name acceptably.

Put these two things together, the man is to be steadfast, and to abound in work. To come back to my figure of a soldier, these two things are wanted, we need a soldier who can hold his position under a galling fire, but we also need him to dash to the front, and lead on a forlorn hope. We need many spiritual cavalymen who can ride ahead, and pioneer for others with dauntless courage, but we cannot dispense with the heavy-armed infantry who hold their own, and wait till the battle turns. It is said that the French had courage enough on the spur of the moment to have rushed up to the cannon’s mouth, but that the German was the victor, because he could quietly abide the heat of the battle, and when affairs looked black, he doggedly kept his post. In the long run *stay power* is the winning virtue. He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved. He who can wait with hope is the man to fight with courage. He crouches down until the fit moment comes, and then he leaps like a lion from the thicket upon the foe. God grant that we may have in this place a body of Christian people who shall be steadfast and unmovable, yet at all times as diligent as they are firm, as intensely zealous as they are obstinately conservative of the truth as it is in Jesus. Pray that we may be, “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

III. Our last point is THE MOTIVE WHICH URGES US TO THESE TWO DUTIES. There are a great many other motives, but the one mentioned in the text is, “forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” If we derive our motives for Christian labor or steadfastness from the things which we see, our spirit will oscillate from ardor into coldness, it will rise and fall with the circumstances around us. It is comparatively easy for a successful man to go on preaching or otherwise laboring for the Lord, but I admire the perseverance of the man who remains faithful under defeat. To get such faithfulness we must disentangle ourselves from the idea of being rewarded here. We must be steadfast and unmovable though nobody praises us, and abound in the work of the Lord though no fruit

should come from it, because we have looked beyond this present realm of death, and have gazed into another world where the resurrection shall bring with it our reward.

Dear brethren, let us be steadfast, for our principles are true. If Christ has not risen from the dead, then we are the dupes of an imposition, and let us give it up. Why should we credulously adhere to that which is false? But if Christ has risen from the dead, then our doctrines are true, and let us hold them firmly, and promulgate them earnestly. Since our cause is a good one, let us seek to advance it. Only that which is true will live, time devours the false. The death warrant of every false doctrine is signed. A fire is already kindled which will consume the wood, and hay, and stubble of error, but our principles are gold, and silver, and precious stones, and will endure the flame.

“Therefore, let us be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, therefore what we do is not done for a dead Christ. We are not fighting for a dead man’s cause. We are not contending for an effete dynasty, or a name to conjure by, but we have a living Captain, a reigning King, one who is able both to occupy the throne and to lead on our hosts to battle. Oh, by the Christ in glory, I beseech you, brethren, be you steadfast!

If it could be proven tomorrow that Napoleon still lived, there might be some hope for his party, but with the chieftain dead, the cause faints. Now Christ Jesus lives. As surely as He died, He rose and lives again, and His name shall endure forever. His name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in Him. All generations shall call Him blessed. The colors of that grand old red-cross flag, to defend which your fathers bled, have not in any degree become faded. It has braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze, but its history is as yet in its infancy.

Our grand cause is imaged this day, not by a baby in the Virgin’s arms, nor by a dead man in the hands of His enemies, but by a living, reigning, triumphant, glorified Christ, full of splendor and of majesty. Let us rally to His call, for He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. Behold, He comes! Even now the angels bring forth the white horse comparisoned for the Conqueror, He who is called the faithful and True One shall ride at the head of His elect armies. Even at this moment we see the ensign gleaming above the horizon. The Lord is on His way. Our Captain puts on His vesture dipped in blood, while on His head are many crowns. He shall smite the nations, and rule them with a rod of iron, and He has on His vesture, and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Let us continue true to Him, for evil would be our case if we were to desert His cause, and then should see Him come in the glory of His Father, attended by cohorts of angels. It would be a dreadful thing to have deserted the army just when the shout of “victory” was about to be raised. Be you steadfast, unmovable, for He is risen, and He ever lives to secure the victory.

Our work of faith is not in vain, because we shall rise again. If what we do for God were to have its only reward on earth, it were a poor prospect. Strike out the hope of the hereafter, and the Christian’s reward would be gone. But beloved, we shall rise again. Our work is ended when our eye is closed in death, but our life is not ended with our work. We shall preach no more, we shall no more teach the little children, we shall no more talk with the wayfarer about the Savior. But we shall enjoy better things than these, for we shall sit upon our Savior’s throne even as He sits upon His Father’s throne. Our heads shall have crowns to deck them, our hands shall wave the palm of victory. We shall put on the white robe—the victors apparel. We shall stand around the throne in triumph, and shall behold and share the glories of the Son of God.

O brethren, shrink not, for the crown is just within your reach. Never think of diminishing your service, rather increase it, for the reward is close at hand. And remember that as you will rise again, so those whom you come in contact with will also rise again. When I have preached the Gospel on a Sunday I have thought, “Well, I shall never see many of these people again,” and the reflection has flashed across my mind, “Yes, I shall. And if I have faithfully, as God’s servant, preached the truth, I shall not need to be afraid to see them either.” If they have received benefit and found Christ through the witness I have borne, they shall be my reward hereafter in the land of the living. And even if they reject

the testimony, yet shall they bear their witness to my faithfulness in having preached to them the Word of God, for they shall rise again.

O beloved, what is this poor world? There, shut your eyes to it, for it is not worth your gaze. What is there here below? What do I see but fleeting shadows, and dreams, and phantoms? What shall I live for? What is there worth living for beneath yon stars? What if I hoard up wealth, I shall have to leave it to ungrateful heirs! What if I get fame, yet how can the breath of man add to my comfort when I lie tossing on the verge of eternity? What is there worth living for, I say, beneath yon stars?

But there is a something that makes it worthwhile existing, and makes life grand and noble. It is this, if I may crown with praise that head which for my sake was crowned with thorns, if I may honor Him who was dishonored for my sake, if to the manifestation of the glories of JEHOVAH I may have contributed a share, if at the reading of the records of all time it may be found that I put out my talent as a faithful servant, and gained interest for my Master, it shall be well. Saved not of debt—far from the thought!—but of grace alone, yet shall it be no small thing, out of a sense of indebtedness to grace, to have lived, and loved, and died for Jesus.

What more can I say? Are there no ambitions among you? I know there are. Young men, consecrate yourselves to God this day. If you have looked to Jesus, and trusted Him, serve Him forever. Preach Him if you can. Go abroad into the foreign field if you may. If you cannot do that, make money for Him that you may give it to His cause. Open your shop for His sake. Let everything be done for Jesus. Take this, from now on, for your motto, All for Jesus, always for Jesus, everywhere for Jesus. He deserves it.

I should not so speak to you if you had to live in this world only. Alas, for the love of Jesus, if you were all, and nought beside, O earth! But there is another life—live for it. There is another world—live for it. There *is* a resurrection, there *is* eternal blessedness, there *is* glory, there *are* crowns of pure reward—live for them, by God's grace live for them. The Lord bless you, and save you. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON, 1 CORINTHIANS 15.

MR. SPURGEON'S twentieth year of ministry in London will be commemorated by the erection of buildings to accommodate his College. It will be a generous thing if all who have benefited by his sermons will contribute to the work. The estimated cost will be ten thousand pounds. Help will be gladly received by Mr. Spurgeon, Nightingale Lane, Clapham.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.